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ABSTRACT

Police officers help children grow up in a law-abiding society. In nurturing and protecting the young, there must be a division of labor among responsible adults; it is difficult for police officers to do their job if others do not help. In the 1960's and 1970's, the attitude existed that schools should do the schooling without interference from families, neighborhoods, and churches. Americans learned that this did not work. A similar lesson is being learned about children and drugs. The drug problem is the greatest single threat to the well-being of our children; solving this problem will require appropriate division of labor. The incorrect attitude has been that the drug problem is solely a law enforcement problem and police officers should solve it. Whether or not a child gets involved with drugs depends on moral guidance taught at home and in school. Parents at home, teachers in schools, and friends in neighborhoods share the responsibility of enforcing drug laws. Although police officers have taken up extra responsibility by educating about drugs, others such as schools have not always carried out their responsibilities. A handbook, "Schools without Drugs," meant to help get drugs out of our schools, homes, and communities has been made available by the Department of Education. Parents, educators, and others can be valuable police allies in drug enforcement. (ABL)

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INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CHIEFS OF POLICE

Opryland Hotel
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It's a pleasure to be here today. Today is National Drug Abuse Education Day, and it is fitting on this day to pay tribute to the work done in drug education by police departments across the country. It is an important contribution that has not received the recognition it deserves.

We all, of course, recognize another, even more fundamental contribution police officers make to the children of this country. You help see to it that our children grow up in a safe, orderly, law-abiding society. Just about the most important thing a society can do is provide for the nurture and protection of the young. That's what the job -- the task, the calling -- of police officers is all about.

But it is hard to do your job if others aren't doing theirs. In a task like the nurture and protection of the young, there must be a division and sharing of labor among responsible adults.

Let me give you an example of what I mean. For two decades, the 60's and 70's, our schools did not do as good a job as they should have. Our children paid for it. A part of the problem was that in some communities, and in some schools, there was an attitude that, since it was the schools' specific function to educate the young, that job should simply and solely be left to the schools. In fact, the attitude among some was: schools

know how to educate the young better than anyone else, and the values and wisdom of institutions like families and neighborhoods and churches tend to get in the way. So those institutions should stay out of things. Let schools do the schooling.

But it doesn't work like that. This country found that out. There must be many teachers in the lives of our children. Parents are first and foremost among them. But others must help too -- schools need allies and parents need allies. Businessmen, neighbors, priests, and rabbis must be involved in the education of a child. Everyone must pitch in. We've learned this over the past two decades.

I think the American people are learning a similar lesson with respect to another problem that has to do with the raising of our children -- drugs. I have said before that the drug problem is the greatest single threat to the well-being of our children. And solving that problem will require the best kind of division of labor.

For a long time in this country, many people took the attitude that the drug problem was mostly a law enforcement problem. And since it is the police whose specific job is law enforcement, the attitude was that it was mostly their responsibility to solve the drug problem. The attitude was, "The police have to do something about this; the police have to get drugs away from our children." For a long time, many of you

were out there fighting a fight that you should not have been fighting alone.

Let me point out, first of all, that the drug problem is not just an enforcement problem. For example, whether or not a child gets involved with drugs depends a lot on values taught from the youngest age. It depends on the moral guidance received at home and in school. Character, even in this modern age, is still the first defense of our children when it comes to something like this.

Second, and a point that I think is often overlooked, is that enforcement itself is to a certain extent a shared responsibility. Yes, it is your specific job to enforce the laws and thereby to keep drugs out of the community at large. But the "community at large" is not the only domain in which our children dwell. There are other environments. And there are other adults in those environments who are responsible for enforcement of rules, laws, and behavior in the lives of our children. There are, for example, homes. Here, parents are the chief enforcement officers. So are grandparents, aunts, uncles, and older brothers and sisters. A school is another specific environment in which children dwell daily. Here, principals, teachers, and administrators are the chief enforcement officers -- they are the ones mainly responsible for keeping drugs out of school. Another environment is the neighborhood. Here, to a large extent, neighbors and friends are the enforcement officers.

Now, none of these people can do this job alone. They all must have help, they must have allies. Parents must have allies in the schools. Schools must have allies in the home. They all must have allies in you. But likewise, you must have allies in them. When it comes to drugs, you can't possibly be expected to be all rolled into one - parent, teacher, neighbor, principal, priest, and police officer. In short, you can't do your job effectively without allies any more than a teacher or a parent could.

I believe that policemen have known this lesson of shared responsibility for quite some time. Policemen have been remarkably willing to take up their responsibility for educating people about drugs, even though your specific job is enforcement. The police in this country have a remarkable record of willingness to come to schools, civic groups, and churches and talk about drugs. You've done your part in education as well as in enforcement, and for that you are to be commended.

Unfortunately, there are many in the adult community who have not been so mindful of their responsibilities. Indeed, there are many who have been less attentive to their own specific responsibilities, not to mention the special obligation to chip in, help others, required by a national concern on the order of drugs. At times, some schools look the other way, ignore drug problems on their own turf. In so doing, they've

made your job tougher. And very likely, they've considerably curtailed their own educational effectiveness.

I am happy to say, however, that lately this lesson of shared responsibility has come to be more widely recognized by others, not just the police. It seems to me that a new attitude about drugs has emerged. People are beginning to take up the tasks of both education and enforcement.

Last month, I introduced a new Education Department handbook called Schools Without Drugs. This is a handbook meant to help get drugs out of our schools, homes, and communities -- out of our children, period. Your Executive Director, Jerald Vaughn, provided special assistance to the preparation of the book, and I'd like to thank him for his help. Let me also thank the chiefs whose officers took the time to meet with me in Los Angeles, Las Vegas, Kansas City, Washington, D.C., and elsewhere. Another example of the police helping others do their part in the community assault on drugs.

In presenting Schools Without Drugs, I made the point -- as I've made here today -- that drug use is a national problem, it concerns everyone, and eliminating it requires everyone's participation. Consequently, I said, Schools Without Drugs is a book for everyone. I urged that all Americans -- teachers, neighbors, religious and community leaders -- call our toll-free number to obtain a free copy of the book. And I urged that school officials work closely with law enforcement officials and parents.

The public reaction has been staggering. On the first day of release alone, we had over 100,000 calls on our toll-free number. We had 20 phone lines, and couldn't take all the calls that were coming in. We had to add more lines. Three weeks later, we're still averaging 2,657 calls a day, requesting 15,600 copies. As of last Friday, we're in the process of sending out well over 600,000 books.

Who's asking for it? All types. We've heard from school bus drivers in Sarasota, Florida and Enid, Oklahoma who plan to distribute copies to every student on their route. We heard from a 10-year-old child in Dubuque, Iowa who requested copies to use in starting a "no-drug" club at school. And we heard from a disc jockey in Searcy, Arizona who will read sections of Schools Without Drugs as part of his daily program.

Now these, I submit, are examples that the American people have begun to realize that removing drugs from our society is not something you can just expect the police to do for you. Among other things, parents and educators are realizing that, just as the police can be valuable allies in drug education, so they, parents and educators, can be valuable allies in drug enforcement.

Let me close today by telling you about an incident I observed ten years ago, while doing some in-service work with two veteran police officers in Boston. While we were riding on patrol one evening, we got a call about a young child who had

been wandering alone. Those two officers went to the neighborhood, and began taking the child from door to door trying to find his parents, or someone who knew him. The next day they were at it again. They kept saying over and over, "We've got to find his parents. We've got to find some relatives." They knocked on doors and asked, "Do you know this child? Do you think you might know anyone who knows him?"

What really struck me was not only the concern, but the patience, kindness, and attentiveness that those officers gave the child. It was as if he belonged to them. They were all the child had, and they knew that, in a sense, for the time being at least, they were his parents.

These two police officers were glad to do what they did. And they were great to have done it. But they certainly should not have had to do that job alone. Likewise with drugs. In fighting drugs, our police have by and large been like those two officers with the child: there when no one else is, ready and willing to take charge. They have been unfailing institutions of last resort. But this does not mean that the whole problem should be yours. There should also be institutions of first, second, third, and fourth resort: parents, schools, ministers, and others.

Charles Eliot, former president of Harvard University, once said that in the campaign for character, no auxiliaries are to be refused. Well, in the campaign against drug abuse, you and your men have proved absolutely invaluable auxiliaries and

allies. We are lucky to have you there. But we must remember, and you must not let us forget, that you should never be standing there alone; there are many other indispensable allies who should be there with you, ready and willing to help in the nurture and protection of our children. When you see the need, never hesitate to remind others of that responsibility.